

# Mid South Conference 1978-12 Zechariah's Visions

by Bob Clark

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*Bob Clark's sermon explores Zechariah's visions, emphasizing God's purging judgment to prepare His people for the coming kingdom.*

**Duration:** 29:40

**Scripture:** Zechariah 3:4, Zechariah 5:3-4, Zechariah 5:6, Zechariah 6:5, Zechariah 6:9-15

**Topics:** "Zechariah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of God's preparation conduct in relation to the imminent return of Jesus Christ. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to be purged and prepared for the coming of the Lord. The preacher refers to several visions in the book of Zechariah, highlighting the theme of going forth and the spirits of the heavens. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of God exposing the sin among his people in order for true cleansing and preparation to take place.

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## Transcript

This will be my last opportunity to share thoughts with you from the Word of God, and I want to thank you for your encouragement and prayer, and once again another year of a very enjoyable time for me to share with you, and I pray that the Spirit of God would bless His Word to your soul and enlarge us spiritually as we grow in a deeper knowledge of Him and His Word. I'd like you please to turn in your Bible to the Book of Zechariah, Chapter 5. We're going to have an abbreviated reading with the plan in mind to be able to finish the rest of the vision. The last three visions are a different character than the preceding five.

The first five visions were designed by God to give Zechariah encouragement, refreshment of soul, a message of cheer and blessing, and reaffirming the joys of the coming kingdom and the presence of Messiah and the greatness of the nation to come. The last three visions are visions of judgment, but they're not to be misconstrued, I'd like to suggest, as senile judgment against God's people, but rather a purging, cleansing judgment. It's helpful for us, interpretively, to look at this particular set of verses and link them together.

We're not going to view them as three separate visions, but preferably we're going to look at them in their context and see that there is an overriding principle that links these last three together, even in the words

or the verbs that are used. For example, in Chapter 5 and verse 3, this is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth, that expression going forth. Verse 4, I will bring it forth.

Verse 5, the angel that talks with me said, lift up thine eyes and see what it is that goeth forth. In the middle of verse 6, this is an ephah that goeth forth. Chapter 6, verse 5, these are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord.

The black horses therein go forth into the north country, the white go forth after them, the grizzled go forth to the south country. So we see that there is even in vocabulary something that hasn't occurred up to this point now is used all the way through the last three visions. So God is, in the word structure themselves, besides the actual thought, the concept, he is drawing to our attention the preparation for the millennial kingdom.

There is one last act that must be effected on the part of God in order to purge and to cleanse his people, to prepare them for the reign of our Lord. And we come to this conclusion because the latter part of chapter 6, verses 9 to 15, give us the purposeful goal toward which these visions are going to be consummated. The word of the Lord came unto me saying, this is in chapter 6, verse 9, take of them of the captivity of hell thy of Tobijah and Jediah which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedek the high priest, who you might recall back in chapter 3 and verse 4 was cleansed, to speak unto him saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the branch, or the sprout, that's the fulfillment of the latter vision of the cleansing of the priesthood, he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, he shall bear the glory, and sit upon and rule upon, excuse me I misread that, and sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the council of peace shall be between them both, that is between the priest and the king.

So we can see these last three visions are concentrated to sweep into the immediate preparation for the coming of the kingdom. Now for the application, our time is brief, so we want to make an immediate application rather than be interpretive. The Lord is soon coming.

Our blessed Lord shall soon return. What he is looking for in your life and mine, if we have complied with these preceding visions, if we have seen the movements and exercises in our own soul, then this general concept is what he is looking for, a purging, a preparation conduct, and this is what we like to call vision number six, God's preparation conduct. He is going to make a preparation, he is conducting himself in a way that is geared to convey to you and me preparation for the coming of the Lord, and then there is a purging between verses five and eleven, and lastly God's plans are consummated in this last vision.

Chapter five, verses one to seven, give us the exposure, the exposure of the sin that is amongst God's people. He has cleansed by his grace, and tokened his care, and prepared the nation in every way possible with this last exception. Now he must expose the sin of God's people.

This is best done by God. We do well to allow God to expose the sin of his people. Everybody of God's people have varying tolerance levels for exposure, and a capacity to respond with full free disposition to what God works in our heart.

Sometimes we are apt to be a little bit less than gracious or kind, or maybe have some other malice in our spirit or thoughts, so we are best left to intercessory prayer, the ministry of God's word, to expose this

which is wrong, and this is what is suggested here. The flying scroll that we read of in verses one to five is actually a scroll. It is unraveled, it's like a giant banner.

Some of our King James Bible, for example, will say a roll, and it's not to be misconstrued as a sesame bun or something of the kind, you know, it's a scroll that has already had the seals broken, and it's rolled out like a giant banner. The importance of this is the fact that our dimensions of the banner is given, and immediately any numbers or facts such as this kind of data should stay in our minds, and we should pursue it, and then we make our interpretation right from within the scripture, and the fact that this banner flying over the nation of Israel, or the city of Jerusalem, the length thereof in verse two is 20 cubits, and the breadth thereof 10 cubits. It's the exact measurement, 30 foot by 15 foot, of the tabernacle in the wilderness.

What was the tabernacle in the wilderness? The sense of the presence of God amongst his people. The way, the access to the Lord, but the key is, I will dwell amongst my people. So God is here portraying to us that this scroll unraveled is giving us God sweeping in in judgment over God's people, and this banner is moving over, written on both sides.

That's why the scroll is open, and the thing that is drawn to our attention that is written on both sides is very likely the law itself. The reason why we say this, you notice in verse three, this is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth, and maybe a more accurate translation would be the land. It's not so much the whole earth as it is God's people, purging and cleansing God's people for the reign of Christ to prepare them to enter into his kingdom.

Everyone that stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side, according to the scroll, and everyone that sweareth shall be cut off, as on that side, according to the scroll. In other words, what has been written on the scroll is the Ten Commandments, and what the Spirit of God chooses to enumerate is the two middle commandments on either side, or the middle commandment. On one side, the law that has to do with our relationship to God, and that is, we shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

The middle of the five commandments on one side, and the middle one of the other side, thou shalt not steal our relationship to our brethren. It's possible that the purpose of the scroll is only to say that God is coming over God's people and evaluating them, judging them, in the light of the law. Or, with a little bit of sanctified thought or exercise, it might be that these are the particular sins of which the nation of Israel in that future day shall be gravely guilty of, and that is stealing and perjury.

These are the two things that are suggested by this particular law. God says, I will bring it forth in verse four, and it will enter into the house of the thief and into the house of him that sweareth falsely, underlining again those particular sins of perjury and thievery. Perjury against God, taking his name in vain, swearing and not fulfilling our word of people a sense of obligation, honesty and integrity, and taking things that do not belong to us, plundering others.

And it shall consume the house with the timber and the stones thereof. A very intense examination on the part of God's word of God's people. But, once again, the important thing that we want to emphasize for our own thought and exercise is, now, this is the beginning of a sequence of thought.

Do not treat it separately in your mind. You'll notice that even the structure of the vision is different now. Then, and the conjunction demands a flow of thought, then the angel that talked with me went forth and said unto me, lift up now thine eyes, and see what it is that goeth forth.

Now, he's giving an explanation of it. So, the second vision here, or the seventh vision, verses 5 to 11, this vision is meant to explain, and it's a continued process of exposure. This is the first thought, verses 1 to 7, the exposure of the sin.

The reason for the exposure is to expel it. I want to say that again. The reason for the exposure of the sin is in order that there can be an expulsion of sin.

God is not interested in shaming and embarrassing and crushing you. Many of us who are young believers really believe this. We have dealt with parents in our childhood who have dealt this way and have presumed upon us and given us such a sense of guilt and sin only for the sake of crushing and showing control and with the purpose of embarrassing, rather than the biblical context is the fact that sin is brought to the surface and it might be removed, that you might be free, that you might have joy in your heart, and that's why you were urged to sit in judgment upon yourself, that you would not be condemned, that we make these confessions happily and gladly.

Thank God for the conviction of sin. The convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit is tremendous importance, otherwise you would be shackled with an irrevocable burden that would sink you into a dismal slough of grief and heartache and sorrow, unless you honestly believe God's word. God creams it out of the top.

God brings it to the top and brings it to the fore, not as punishment, but for the thought of getting rid of it, that you will acknowledge what you are. That's the reason for all of those exercises of soul you go through. That's the reason for your trials.

That's the reason for your heartaches and letdowns and discouragements and problems. Not to grind you under, but that you and I might have this chair winnowed out and take a look at it and confess it and be rid of it, and then forgetting those things that are behind, press onward and move into a closer relationship to him. So he says, now the banner sweeps in and the scroll examines and judges God's people for what purpose.

What is this then? Legitimately, he asked in verse six. He said, this is an ephah that goeth forth. This is a bushel basket.

This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said, moreover, this is their resemblance through all the earth. Behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead, and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

And he said, this is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah, and cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof, then lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold, there came two women, and the wind was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a sword. They lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither did he spare the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar, and it shall be established and set there upon her own base. What is the ephah? Well, if I said to you, well, that's the great almighty dollar, and you would immediately understand that our nation is submerged itself in the importance of the dollar, and its relationship, and its purchasing power, and we strive for the dollar, and all the dollar symbolizes is commerce, industry, business, exchange, worldliness, carnality, and we say it's the almighty buck. That's a colloquial expression.

The ephah in this day, amongst the people of Israel, was the mode of exchange, and this becomes this appropriate symbol of trade and commerce. Remember, the nation of Israel are a pastoral people, caring for the sheep and the animals, and basically doing these practical shepherding things, as well as gleaning from their vineyards, and selling and commerce in a very modest way. Now, until their captivity, they were preoccupied with the ground that God had provided, and lived off of the ground.

After their captivity, and they went into Babylon, they picked up in Babylon a sin of which they had never been previously guilty of. Before Babylonian captivity, they were guilty of idolatry. After the Babylonian captivity, it is not a legitimate national charge to be guilty of idolatry, but they came back after the captivity, and ever since, and right up to the time the Lord returns, the Jew will be submerged in the ephah.

Commerce, business, trade, industry, self-aggrandizement in the world of exchange. Cleverness, craft, ability, it's almost a byword. When we think of something lightly Gentile people, I say, why, he does business like a Jew.

Meaning, with sharpness, with keenness, with an adroitness, with a skill of craft of exchange. This is what's being symbolized here, the ephah. In other words, what they have picked up back there in Babylon, is now God's people have come in.

They're preoccupied with their commerce, their business, their industry, their getting ahead, their importance in this world, and God must expose this to them. They have cheated, they have perjured themselves to gain this kind of influence and wealth. God exposes the root sin, and then the origin of it.

And the reason why we say the origin, because you'll notice what happens to it, two women come along with wings like a stork, and they pick up this ephah and bring it back to where? Shinar. The plains outside of Babylon, where Babylon originally had its start geographically, and thus showing that all of this came from Babylon, came from the world, came from this place where they had been under discipline, and became so depressed and burdened and heavy, they became occupied with the discipline, forgot the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and came out with more worldliness than they had a corrected life spiritually. Many of us have known something very similar.

You go through a trial, rather than responding to the grace of God, we become discontent, disgruntled, sink into worldly affairs, turn our back upon the Lord's people, get chilled of heart, we become offended and touchy and sensitive, hypersensitive, and we walk off and sit and pout, and we've destroyed our spiritual life. We've never learned the discipline, we've never learned the lessons of the trial or exercise that God brought us through. We have fed the flesh, and what we have done is we've taken from Babylon and brought it over into our lives, and God says, bring it back and put it where it belongs.

Get rid of this evil. Interesting that in order to show its corruption and perversion from divine purposes, it is a woman inside the basket. Now, it's God's purpose to use the woman, not as a symbol of evil, but as a symbol here, rather, of that which is taking the place of leadership and authority.

What's inside the basket? What's the secret problem? A misaligning of God's purposes. To the best of my knowledge of the Word of God, wherever you would find a woman taking the active, aggressive leadership role, you will find the issue of that, if not the origin of it, to be a perversion of God's plan and purpose. The only exception is the proof of it, and that is Deborah.

She takes the leadership because she has the gift of prophecy, and her leadership is to stir up a man, Barak, to put him in the role of leadership and headship. So, God's design is perpetually in order. You could best interpret this woman secreted away inside the Eva under a lead lid.

Secreted away and hidden. Why did God bring it out? To show what's going on, and to see that something is wrong in the whole system. It's not of God.

Do you remember who rides the beast in the book of Revelation? The whore. God has not anything against women. You understand that? Usually there's somebody, two or three people, that have not listened and suddenly get on this and hear a woman mention, don't like the words, you haven't been listening, and then you're going to go away annoyed or peeved or something.

God has nothing against women. God has everything against the men who have allowed the women to be in such a role because of their negligence and coldness of heart. But, nonetheless, this picture of that which is wrong, of a perversion, of that which is evil, the woman that hides the meal and perverts and the leaven, permeates the whole of the kingdom.

Why a woman? To show that it's against God's purposes. What was the problem in Scyatira? Jezebel, a woman, declaring that she had the gift of prophecy and teaching the church there, and her subtle, seductive church truths had permeated, and as corruption of a doctrine, had just permeated the whole of the testimony. So, it's a consistent picture that is used, just as it is here.

Why the ephah, commerce and business? What's the problem behind it? That the whole thing has gotten out of order, and God wants to uncover it. Not to attack his people, but to show them where worldliness and preoccupation with the world is not in harmony with God's plans and purposes. It's a contradiction.

It leads us into things and activities and attitudes of heart that are highly destructive to our spiritual life. We come all the way into the New Testament, and apparently the Jew was still afflicted with it. James mentions many times the wealthy men, and you might like to read James 5, 1-9, and there he clearly announces the wickedness of people that are preoccupied with wealth in this world.

They will just do anything to overcome others. It's still a difficulty, and the seer of the very last writings of the New Testament in 1 John 2, 15-17, in the present continuous sense, he says, stop loving the world! It's not a warning about future events, it's what's going on there. The believers, the majority of whom were Jews, were preoccupied with the world.

Babylonian sin had come over and involved, and it spread onto us, and we are not the exception. The simple lesson is, God would hover over us with his word, wanting to expose to you and me our involvement and the gravity of our sin against God by being involved in the world and the world system. In the cross, you were crucified unto the world and the world unto you, and the Lord would urge us, the sooner that you in your life can realize that ultimately this world and its structure and its system with which we have become so enamored and fall right into its principles and patterns, this is going to be judged.

The only time you hear singing in heaven and the great words of hallelujah ringing out in heaven is after the fall of Babylon, when we are finally in heaven, into our transplanted form, married to the Lamb, with our new minds and perspectives, and then when we see what God does to this world, and so destroys its commerce and religious and industry and everything else, then we sing out with him, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Now we should start thinking that way now. View this world in which we live as

under the judgment of God.

What happens then? Some of you think, oh yeah, one of those kind of preachers, he's going to tell us now we can't do this. No, not at all. Because once you have that perspective, you can do anything you want in this world, and it'll not contaminate you.

And I use that expression, I still advise, I shouldn't say anything you want. You have much greater freedom in your business, in your education, in your social life. Why? Because it no longer has the hook and the bait or the temptation and the lure.

It's just what is happening in this world. And once you have sat in judgment upon it and seen God's condemning sentence against the world, and there it was crucified in Christ Jesus as well as you, then you are dead unto it, and it has no appeal to you, and that sentence has been passed logically in the will and in the conscience of your person. It's no longer temptation, no longer a bait.

The world can come and go with its styles and designs and preferences, and has no hold on such a believer. That is what it is to be delivered from the world, this present evil age. And you go right on with the same business, go right back into that same school, live in that same community, marry to that same person, go on in the same form of life, but you're free from its enslavement.

That's why the law, like a scroll, sweeps in and exposes. That's why God would take it out, lift up the leaden seat, see what the world is like, and then slap the lid out and have it taken away, and says, put it back where it belongs. It finds its roots in Babylon.

Now God's plans must be consummated, and so he says, I turned and lifted up my eyes and looked in chapter 6, 1. Four chariots out from between two mountains, might very well be between two mountains there and the Lord, the mountains were mountains of bread. The chariots were red horses in the second chariot, black horses in the third chariot, white horses in the fourth chariot, grizzled in bay. What are they doing? What are these, my Lord? And the angel said, these are the spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

They go into all the country around. You trace them in verses 6 and 7. And what are they doing? Bringing a final, climactic, stinging judgment upon all that is in opposition to God. He is going to expel this sin.

He is going to sit in judgment on it. The analogy is in Revelation, great time of tribulation, written in the earlier part of the seals of the book in Revelation 6, and then in 17 and 18, and this is what's described to us in chapter 6, verses 1 to 8. One significant thing, finally, we read concerning God in verse 8. Then cried he upon me and spake unto me, saying, These that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country. Mr. Darby, in his translation, says, has satisfied my anger.

The judgment is final and complete. God has exposed what is the sin of his people. He has done it so successfully that they acknowledge it and confess it, and he sweeps it away and brings it back to its origin, plants its face in Babylon and says, That's worldliness.

We are done with this. Now the enemy lands in worlds and powers or judges. Out from Moriah and Olive comes our Lord into the valley of Jehoshaphat and destroys all the enemies of God's people.

An absolute, sure, confident victory for God's people. Toward what end? That Christ should be coronated. That your blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, should rule and reign in this world.

Are you getting ready for his reign? Is he showing you things in your life during this week that are unbecoming? Are you allowing it to be exposed, looking at it and saying, That's just plain worldliness? Say it for what it is. Acknowledge it and set it aside. That's the role of spiritual blessing, and it is toward that end that I would encourage you to strengthen yourself in the Lord and in his grace.

Take us to three men from the captivity. Apparently, very wealthy refugees in verse 10. Their names suggest spiritual health and vigor.

Robust, God's goodness, God understands or God knows. Helvai, Tobijah and Jediah, which are come from Babylon. These are men that have left Babylon with great wealth, have come back now, and they say, Now you three men, pool your wealth together and your riches.

I want you to do something. Give me your silver and gold and make a crown and set it upon the head of Joshua. Can you imagine Joshua's alarm? A priest has never been coronated.

A priest to wear a crown? There must be some mistake. No, the crown is carefully made, carefully bedecked with jewels and elegant things. Zechariah is really interested in this.

Now, this is a new insight, and God is going to reveal to him that the coming king is going to be first a priestly king, and then an economical, governmental ruler. He is going to maintain the relationship with God and also the world around. He's a priest king.

Speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, The man whose name is the branch, he shall grow up out of this place, and he shall build the temple. Joshua is startled. They make a crown.

They actually literally put it upon his head. The moment they put it upon his head, conveyed in the language, in the term of the verb, it's immediately taken away and set up as a memorial. He does not wear that crown, but you notice in verse 14, The crown shall be to Halim, and to Tobijah, and to Judiah, and to Henderson of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, and shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. This shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." We're going to see here that the branch, our Lord Jesus Christ, that little sprout that grew up out of a dry ground, rejected by the nation, coronated in our hearts by the grace of God, he is ultimately going to return, and he is building a temple, and we're told this twice. He shall build the temple of the Lord, verse 13, even he shall build the temple.

Is it possible that it's not just trite duplication, but there's two temples? Is he building a temple now, a spiritual one? Will he come back and build a literal, physical one? There's scripture substantiating that, whether that's what it means or not, but it's certainly going to be that Zerubbabel, who laid the original foundation, his temple was going to stand. That was removed, but when our Lord comes back, there is going to be a temple. He has built a spiritual temple, you and I, the temple for him in which to dwell, and he reigns and rules over us.

When you were baptized, you were baptized into his kingdom. You acknowledge that he was your king, and he was your priestly king who interceded for us, and we are anticipating the great time. We come before, and our blessed Lord, when he returns, shall be this to the whole world, and expressly to the nation of Israel." Zachariah had a message of encouragement, a message geared to strengthen and encourage God's people that, although the work was small, they should go on faithfully.

They should see the glory of God and his presence in their midst. They should set their standards and their goals toward pleasing him, answering up with a good conscience to him and to his word. I would think the message would be the same to you this morning, and I commend you to God and to word of his grace, which is able to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Accept the authority of God's word in your life. Allow the sense of his presence, his intercession, his power. Allow him to cleanse, allow him to expose, allow him to fortify, and strengthen, and bless, and enrich you, and ultimately it shall be for his honor and his glory.

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